

Socio-economic obstacles in Education of Muslim Women: A study of Aligarh District

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Received: 27 Jun 2025; Received in revised form: 25 Jul 2025; Accepted: 29 Jul 2025, Published on: 03 Aug 2025

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Abstract— This paper is an attempt to analyse the Socio-economic problems of Muslim women's education in villages of Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh. This study is based on the secondary sources of data obtained from the census report (2011), Sachar committee report, Gender inequality index, Human development report and other published sources to throw light on the actual status of Muslim women's education. The present study has tried to find out the major problems faced by women who wish to pursue education at school and at higher education institutions. The finding of the study reveals that the educational status of Muslim in general and Muslim women's in particular, is not satisfactory and need special attention. This study also highlights that 42.7% of the total population of the Muslims in India are illiterate; among the Muslim women, illiteracy is as high as 48.11%. Overall the major finding of the study revealed that Muslim women have faced a double disadvantage in terms of accessing educational institutions, low educational attainment and low educational quality.

Keywords— Women, Education, Literacy Rate, Socio-Economic Obstacles, Muslim.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is the main economic factor of personal development. Education is one of the significant social indicators having bearing on the achievement and the growth of an individual as well as the community. This is perceived to be highly suitable for providing employment and thereby improving the quality of life, the level of human well-being and access to basic social services. It is found that 42.72% of the total population of the Muslims in India are illiterate; among the Muslim women, illiteracy is as high as 48.11%. India is one of the least literate societies in the world. Within this broader picture of social disadvantage, the literacy levels of Muslim women's are further skewed towards the bottom. This initial disadvantage i.e. Muslim women's poor literacy rates, completely precludes the possibility of their entering institutions of higher education. Due to this reason the Aligarh Muslim University and the Jamia Millia Islamia-Minority institutions with the specific aim of furthering education among Muslim (Male and Female) in India are unable to have a majority of Muslim students in their professional schools (Census 2011).

Education is the basic and fundamental requirements of citizens of a country in the universal declaration of human rights. Mahatma Gandhi once said "To educate one man

you educate one person, but to educate one woman, you educate a whole civilization." It means education not only empower the woman but empower the whole society. The human civilization has changed from agricultural society to cybernetic age but the position of woman was not so much changed because of educational deprivation.

Muslims occupy the second largest share in India's population after Hindus. Therefore, India's overall economic growth and development are largely depending on the progress of this community. Muslims, by and large have remained backward in attaining education so far. The situation even worse for Muslim women. This give rise to gender disparity in education.

Women in general are the most vulnerable in Indian society and Muslim women in particular are the ubiquitously backward owing to host of different reason the patriarchal nature of our society is also responsible for the pathetic conditions of our women. Moreover; Muslim women suffer more because of the Socio- cultural setup. They are not given enough freedom and hardly have access to higher education a variety of reasons of account for the economic, social, cultural and educational backwardness of Muslim. For the development of rural environment, education should be taken on priority as it is the most important factor. Education is the basis for

creativity and foresightedness that triggers change; it helps in economic growth, quality of life and quality of human resource.

HUMAN DEVELOPEMENT REPORT (2011):

Indian's planning commission's Indian human development report 2011 findings show that improvement on a few indicator like poverty, education and health etc. As regards Muslims but the rate of growth much lower than for schedule castes and schedule tribes. The situation has improved little after SACHCHAR committee report. According to the 2011 report urban poverty is highest among Muslims, rural poverty also higher than that of other religious groups and, indeed, than that of other backward classes. one third of the Muslims in the country were living below the poverty line. The rate of decline in poverty has also been slowest in the Muslim community.

SACHCHAR COMMITTEE REPORT (2006):

Education of Muslim women is not only the problem of Muslims but it is the problem of the whole country. The literacy rate among Muslim women is 50.1% and among Hindu women is 53.1%. The literacy rate among Jain women is highest, it is 90.6%. There is 30% difference between the literacy rate of Muslim women and Jain women. Census says that Muslim women's educational level is lowest among all religious communities. Likewise, work participation rate of the Muslim women is far behind the national average. Their participation is 14.8% while national average is 25.6%. Muslim women's education has always been a problem. The question arises for how long will they not get education like their male counterparts? The Quran does not differentiate between the education of males and females. The first verse of the Quran is about acquiring knowledge. There is no difference between males and females. In a Hadith Prophet Muhammad says "getting education is compulsory on every men and women" Despite these teachings there is so much difference between the education of Muslim men and women. Can the Muslim community progress without educating their women? The answer is absolutely not, it cannot progress without women's education.

A woman is not only a woman; she is a mother, a sister and a wife. For all these roles her role of education is very important. The mother is the first school of the child. Because the child is the closest to her mother, he also spends the most of his time with his mother, so an educated mother can change the perception of the child. The mother is the biggest source of the informal education. By seeing the bad condition of Muslim women's education, the quality of education of Muslim children can easily be judged.

GENDER INEQUALITY INDEX [GII]: According to the human development report 2011, India ranks 129 out of 146 countries on the gender inequality index. Gender inequality index remains a major barrier to human development. Girls and women have made major strides since 1990 but they have not yet gained gender equity. The disadvantages facing women and girls are a major source of inequality. All too often, women and girls are discriminated against health, education, political, labour market etc. with negative consequences for development of their capabilities and their freedom of choice. The GII is an inequality index. It measure gender inequality in three important aspects of human development reproductive health, measured by maternal mortality ratio and adolescent birth rates, empowerment, measured by proportion of parliament by seats occupied by females and proportion of parliamentary seats occupied by adult females and males aged 25 years and older with at least some secondary education and economic status expressed as labour market participation and measured by labour force participation rate of females and males population aged 15 years and older.

The GII is built on the same framework as the IHDI to better expose differences in the distribution of achievement between women and men. It measures the human development costs of gender inequality. Thus the higher the GII value the more disparities between females and males and the more loss to human development.

The GII sheds new light on the position of women in 160 countries.

CAUSES OF EDUCATIONAL BACKWARDNESS OF MUSLIM WOMEN IN INDIA:

The important causes of educational backwardness in Indian society, as summarized by the backward classes commission, are as follows---

1. Traditional apathy for education on account of social environment condition or occupational handicaps.
2. Poverty and lack of means among the communities to educate their children.
3. Lack of sufficient number of educational institutions in rural areas.
4. Living in inaccessible areas and lack of proper communication.
5. Lack of adequate educational aid, in the form of scholarships, monetary grant for the purpose of books, clothing and hostel facilities.

The reasons usually suggested for the present educational backwardness of Indian masses in general. The educational status of Muslims can be examined in the context of their

place in economy. The Muslim community is a homogeneous community; response too varies largely towards programmes of literacy and education.

SOCIAL CAUSES: The overall participation of Muslim women that constitute about 12.6% of the state population end. But most of them remain educationally, socially, politically and cultural backward. There are some social causes such as in security, unwillingness to send distant educational institution, Early marriage to discontinue the women education, neighbor's criticism to girls education. Hindrance to education tour played a major role in the educational backwardness of Muslim women in India.

This study has been conducted in Al-Barkaat institute of education, Aligarh. In this study an attempt has been made to analyze the educational status of Muslim women in our country. This study reveals that female literacy rate at the national level in 65.5% and 59.5% in Uttar Pradesh. On the point of female literacy rate Uttar Pradesh ranks 31st in all over India. The minorities (Muslim, Christians Sikhs, Buddhist, Jain and Parsis). This study reveals that in Muslim women have lowest literacy rate in India that is 50.1. In Uttar Pradesh Muslim women have lowest literacy rate that is 37.28 (2001). In this study author also examined the Muslim women GER in higher education at national and state level of Uttar Pradesh in particular. Uttar Pradesh ranks second highest amongst all states of India on the total number of universities but in terms of overall GER it ranks 11th among all over states in India 16.3. The female related to Muslim community has 41.21 GER in India and 41.84 in Uttar Pradesh. (Sharma, 2015).

In this study authors made an attempt to analyse the Muslim women education and empowerment in rural areas of district. The study was mainly based on primary source of data. The data reveals that socio-economic condition are the major determinants of women liberation than the religion. Education of women is having supreme power for the development of individuality. It is also an instrument for strengthening socially useful skills, habits and attitudes of common citizenship (Waseem et, al.2012).

A study mainly focuses on being a popular Muslim community differs from one social group to another. Educational backwardness of Muslims women which can be describe in three categories first of all backwardness of education and backwardness among Muslims women can

be seen in the context of larger problem. Second, the educational status of Muslims can be examined in the context of their place in economy. Third, Muslim community is not a homogeneous community. The educational status of Muslim women in India is worse than that of Muslims men as clear from this study. Educationally, Muslims comprises one of the most backward communities in the country, Muslims girls and women lay behind their male counterparts and women of all other community. Findings of this study show that the literacy rate of Muslim women is very low comparison to other communities (Devi 2014).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out about what social and economic problems faces by Muslim women during education.
2. To know about the reasons of educational backwardness of Muslim women.
3. To examine the formulation and implementation of government policies and programme directed towards the betterment of Muslim women.

II. AREA OF THE STUDY

The study has been conducted in villages of Aligarh district. Aligarh district is one of the highly developed prosperous and agriculturally advocated districts of western Uttar Pradesh. Aligarh is one of the important districts of Uttar Pradesh located in the north western part in the fertile region of Ganga and Yamuna known as Doab. The density of rural population of Aligarh district is mainly influenced by soil fertility, agricultural and industrial development and development of transport facility. In Aligarh district there is 5 sub-district and 12 blocks.

III. DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

The entire study is based on the secondary sources of data which have been collected from the census of India (2011), various rounds of NSSO data, Sachchar committee Report (2006), Human Development Reports (2011), Gender Inequality Index, journals and other published sources.

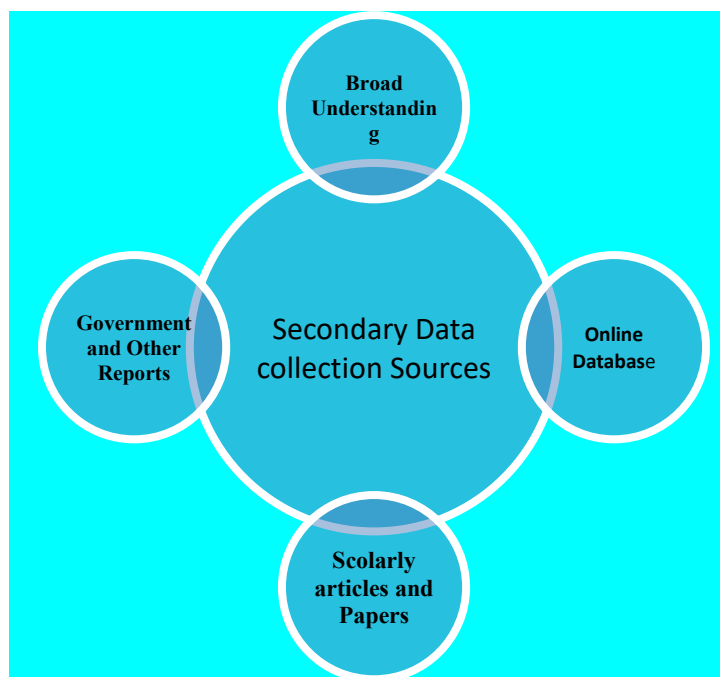


Fig: 1 Developed by the Researcher

Table 1. Percentage of illiteracy among Religious community in India

Religious community	Percentage
Hindus	36.39
Muslims	42.72
Jains	13.57
Christians	25.65
Sikhs	32.49
Buddhist	28.16
Others	49.65

Source: Government of India Census 2011

According to the census 2011, it is clearly evident in the above data about illiteracy among religious community in India. Data illustrates that Muslim community shows 42.72% followed by Hindu 36.39% whereas Sikhs shows 32.49%. However, it clearly shows that Muslims still deprived from education in our society among other religious communities.

Table 2. Percentage of literacy by Religious community in India

Religion	Male	Female	Total
Muslim	51.9	62.41	57.155
Hindus	55.98	70.78	63.38
Jains	84.93	87.86	86.395
Christians	71.97	6.78	74.375
Sikhs	63.29	71.32	67.305
Buddhist	65.6	77.87	71.735
Others	41.38	59.38	50.38

Source: Government of India Census 2011

In this data from the census shows about the literacy among religious communities in India. Data reveals that majority of data shows in female in Jains 87.86% followed by Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhist (70.78%, 71.32%, 77.87%) whereas, Muslims show 62.41%. Data clearly illustrates that Muslims having least literacy among females. Out of total in both male and female there is also least data comes from Muslim community 57.155%. Data indicates that Muslim female literacy is lower than other community in India.

Table 3: Literacy and Educational attainment (Overall literacy rates in Aligarh District)

Category	Total Literacy	Male Literacy	Female Literacy
Total Population	67.52%	77.97%	55.68%
Urban Areas	67.85%	73.73%	61.21%
Rural Areas	67.34%	80.11%	52.8%

Source: Government of India Census 2011

These figures indicate that Muslim Women in Aligarh have a significantly lower literacy rate compared to their male counterparts and women from other religious communities.

IV. DISCUSSION

The above data shows that women lag behind men in almost every literacy rate. India a secular nation with a wide range of religious beliefs as well as unique customs and traditions, can occasionally provide significant obstacles to women's education. Equal opportunities should be provided so that women can demand information and knowledge and take control of their own lives. As we know education is very important part of our life. Without education there is no possibility of progress of any community. Many Muslim women are deprived from education in our society. There are many social and economic causes of educational backwardness of Muslim women. Educational backwardness is the biggest hindrance to progress of any Nation. So there is need to address this problem properly and adequately. For addressing this problem we should go inside the problem and know about what was the mechanism and causes behind it. This study shall help us in understanding the situation of the Muslim women and their problem in the context of education. This study shall also throw some light on various forces those are acting as barrier against the getting education of Muslim women. Social discrimination and the economic exploitation of our minority group will be eliminated to uphold the principles of social justice and accomplish both social and economic development for society.

V. CONCLUSION

Muslim society of India is very heterogeneous in nature because of the influence of caste system. Muslim women are facing various Socio-economic problems in contemporary society, which has to be understood in terms

of their educational background. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach involving community participation, infrastructural development, and supportive policies to create conducive environment to the educational advancement of Muslim women. Women NGOs should rise up to the challenges of the millennium and set-up activities to empower their less privileged women. Government should support provide a political will, encouragement and support to address the problem .women should come out and be bold to take up challenges etc.

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